

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, AREA 8,
BUILDING 33, MAINTENANCE BUILDING No. 1
DAYTON VIL.
GREENE COUNTY
OHIO

HAER No. OH-79-AD

HAER
OHIO
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, AREA B,
BUILDING 39, MAINTENANCE BUILDING No. 1

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Location: On northeast corner of D and 3rd Streets; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Area B, Dayton Vicinity, Greene County, Ohio.

Dates of Construction: Original Building 35: 1929.
Original Building 39: 1941.
Connected To Form New Building 39: 1945.
Reconstructed After Fire: 1949-1951.

Present Owner: USAF.

Present Use: National Aerospace Plane Joint Program Office.
Video Teleconference Center.

Significance: Both structures now joined to create Building 39 have functioned as a variety of support facilities for the activities of Wright Field, and subsequently Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Project History: This report is part of the overall Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Area B documentation project conducted by HAER 1991-1993. See overview report, HAER No. OH-79, for a complete description of the project.

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DESCRIPTION: Originally two separate buildings numbered 39 and 35, Maintenance Building No.1 is a one-story, six-course American bond brick structure. It has a low-pitched roof with three galvanized sheet metal gables, and rectangular columns with concrete coping at the corners. The space between the two original buildings was filled with a similar style brick structure in 1945. Many windows, particularly on the west building (original Building 39), have been bricked up.

HISTORY: Building 35, the original Wright Field Maintenance Shop, was erected in 1929, and Building 39, Maintenance Shop Number 4, was added on the west side in 1941. Both began as ordinary maintenance facilities but eventually became associated with some of the world's most advanced aeronautical technology. The 1940s was an eventful decade for the twin structures. Building 35 continued as a maintenance center, but some World War II era maps list Building 39 as "Station Hospital", which suggests that the structure was used as temporary space to accommodate the sick among the thousands of additional airmen stationed at Wright Field during the war. As a new structure with an open interior plan, a temporary (or even permanent) hospital could easily be set up.

By 1945 Building 39 was back to its original purpose, and a compatible gabled brick infill structure was erected to connect it with Building 35. The resulting building retained the number 39. On July 9, 1948, this building underwent a serious fire during which the west portion was destroyed and the east portion (formerly Building 35) experienced some damage. In 1951 a replacement west section was constructed, adhering closely to its former specifications.

Since then, the building has been used for offices and, while the interior has undergone various changes to accommodate different organizations, the exterior has remained largely unaltered. Occupants of the building have included the Air Installation Administrative Office for Area B (1949), the Comptroller (1962), the Aeronautical Systems Division (ASD) in 1963, and the Air Force Auditing Agency (1980s). In 1989 and 1990, two new offices occupied Building 39. The first was the Joint Program Office (JPO, not to be confused with the Joint Project Offices of the early 1950s) for the National Aerospace Plane (NASP). This organization is led by a director from the Air Force and is responsible for coordinating the development of the next generation of re-usable space vehicles with the Navy and NASA. Officially designated the X-30, the NASP is expected to eventually replace the space shuttle because of its ability to take off horizontally like an airplane, rather than blasting off like a traditional rocket. The one-stage NASP rocket engine will propel it from take-off to hypersonic speeds which will

place it in low-earth orbit, allowing it to circle the earth many times before re-entering the atmosphere, decelerating, and landing like an aircraft. Plans for the NASP include both space research and rapid space travel to distant points on earth.

The other new tenant is the Video Teleconference Center (VTC). With this facility Air Force officials can interact with other Air Force, government, or contracting individuals via direct audio and video systems. This high-tech facility allows face-to-face discussions and negotiations to take place without the expense and time of travel. Utilizing secure communications lines, those using the VTC can discuss classified information without fear of interception.

For bibliography, see Wright-Patterson Air Force Base overview report (HAER No. OH-79).